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TOT: 01 SEP 83

DIRECTOR

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BRIEF 01 DIRECTOR  
TO: LATIN AMERICA BRIEF.

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LATIN AMERICA BRIEF FOR 31 AUGUST 1983.

FROM: DDI/O/CPAS.

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1. CHILE: GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL MURDERED

2. NR

1. CHILE: GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL MURDERED

THE MURDER YESTERDAY OF THE COMMANDER OF THE SANTIAGO MILITARY DISTRICT PROBABLY IS PART OF THE RADICAL LEFT'S PLAN TO USE VIOLENCE TO UNDERMINE THE GOVERNMENT'S DIALOGUE WITH THE MODERATE OPPOSITION. MOVEMENT OF THE REVOLUTIONARY LEFT TERRORISTS REPORTEDLY HAVE CLAIMED CREDIT FOR THE KILLING. AFTER A MEETING OF THE MILITARY JUNTA, NAVY COMMANDER MERINO ANNOUNCED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BRING THE FULL FORCE OF THE LAW AGAINST THOSE INVOLVED. CONTINUE ITS DISCUSSIONS WITH MODERATE OPPOSITION LEADERS, AND PROVIDE GREATER SECURITY TO THOSE WHO NEED IT.

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Declassified and  
Approved for Release  
July 2000

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TGT: 01 [REDACTED] SEP 83

DIRECTOR [REDACTED]

COMMENT: //THE TERRORISTS ARE LIKELY TO PERSIST IN THEIR EFFORTS. BUT THEY PROBABLY WILL NOT MANAGE TO PROVOKE IN THE SHORT TERM THE MASSIVE GOVERNMENT CRACKDOWN THEY ARE SEEKING. THE INCIDENT, HOWEVER, WILL PROMPT MUCH TIGHTER SECURITY MEASURES FOR OPPOSITION PROTESTS SCHEDULED FOR EARLY NEXT MONTH.// [REDACTED]

2. [REDACTED]

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Background

A two-year economic recession and President Pinochet's reluctance to accelerate the constitutional timetable for returning Chile to civilian rule in 1989 have dramatically eroded his popular support and spurred development of a strong opposition movement this year. Moderate and broad-based political and labor coalitions have sponsored "days of national protest", which have gathered momentum each month since May and caused some moderates in Pinochet's cabinet and military junta to urge him to grant concessions. The Democratic Alliance--which includes conservative Republicans, centrist Christian and Social Democrats, and non-Marxist Radical and Socialist leftists--announced a platform on 21 August that called for political reforms, Pinochet's resignation, and a return to full civilian democracy within 18 months.

Government and moderate opposition leaders recently opened a dialogue in hopes of reversing political polarization. Sergio Jarpa--a conservative civilian diplomat appointed Interior Minister on 10 August--has met with opposition labor, human rights, and political leaders during the past three weeks. As a result, the government has announced some limited but psychologically appealing concessions, fostering a more positive atmosphere for dialogue and possible compromise. The assassination this week of the capital's military governor has not derailed negotiations. Because fundamental differences still exist, however, various opposition groups still plan demonstrations--aimed at inducing the military to force major concessions from the President or to remove him--on several days surrounding the tenth anniversary of the military coup on 11 September.

The perspectives of the key players in the coming weeks are as follows:

- The moderate opposition groups are faced with a dilemma. They want to avoid extreme polarization, which could deprive them of leadership of the opposition movement, give the initiative to the radical left as